

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. – 6. (Canceled)

7. (New) An isolated alkaline protease having an amino acid sequence which is at least 90% homologous to an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 1 and SEQ ID NO: 2, wherein said isolated alkaline protease has alkaline protease activity.

8. (New) The alkaline protease of claim 7, which has an amino acid sequence that is at least 90% homologous to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1.

9. (New) An isolated nucleic acid encoding the alkaline protease of claim 8.

10. (New) A microorganism which is transformed with the nucleic acid of claim 9 and produces the alkaline protease.

11. (New) The microorganism of claim 10, which is a bacteria.

12. (New) The microorganism of claim 10, which is a yeast.

13. (New) The microorganism of claim 10, which is a fungus.

14. (New) The microorganism of claim 10, which is gram-positive.

15. (New) The microorganism of claim 10, which is gram-negative.

16. (New) The microorganism of claim 10, which is Eschericia coli.

17. (New) The microorganism of claim 10, which belongs to the genus Bacillus.

18. (New) The microorganism of claim 10, which belongs to the genus Saccharomyces.

19. (New) The microorganism of claim 10, which belongs to the genus Aspergillus.

20. (New) The microorganism of claim 10, which is selected from the group consisting of (1) Bacillus sp. KSM-KP 43, deposited under the accession number FERM BP-6532, (2)

Bacillus sp. KSM-KP 1790, deposited under the accession number FERM BP-6533, and (3)

Bacillus sp. KSM KP-9860, deposited under the accession number FERM BP-6534.

21. (New) A method of producing the microorganism of claim 10, comprising transforming a microorganism with the nucleic acid.

22. (New) A method of producing the alkaline protease of claim 8, comprising culturing a microorganism which produces the alkaline protease in a culture medium and then isolating the alkaline protease from the culture medium.

23. (New) A detergent composition comprising the alkaline protease of claim 8.

24. (New) The detergent composition of claim 23, which contains 0.1 to 5000 U of the alkaline protease per kg of the composition.

25. (New) The detergent composition of claim 24, which comprises a surfactant.

26. (New) The detergent composition of claim 24, which comprises 0.5 to 60 wt. % of the detergent.

27. (New) The detergent composition of claim 24, which contains at least one enzyme other than the alkaline protease.

28. (New) The alkaline protease of claim 7, which has an amino acid sequence that is at least 90% homologous to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2.

29. (New) An isolated nucleic acid encoding the alkaline protease of claim 28.

30. (New) A microorganism which is transformed with the nucleic acid of claim 28 and produces the alkaline protease.

31. (New) The microorganism of claim 30, which is a bacteria.

32. (New) The microorganism of claim 30, which is a yeast.

33. (New) The microorganism of claim 30, which is a fungus.

34. (New) The microorganism of claim 30, which is gram-positive.

35. (New) The microorganism of claim 30, which is gram-negative.

36. (New) The microorganism of claim 30, which is *Eschericia coli*.

37. (New) The microorganism of claim 30, which belongs to the genus *Bacillus*.

38. (New) The microorganism of claim 30, which belongs to the genus
Saccharomyces.

39. (New) The microorganism of claim 30, which belongs to the genus *Aspergillus*.

40. (New) The microorganism of claim 30, which is selected from the group consisting of (1) *Bacillus* sp. KSM-KP 43, deposited under the accession number FERM BP-6532, (2) *Bacillus* sp. KSM-KP 1790, deposited under the accession number FERM BP-6533, and (3) *Bacillus* sp. KSM KP-9860, deposited under the accession number FERM BP-6534.

41. (New) A method of producing the microorganism of claim 30, comprising transforming a microorganism with the nucleic acid.

42. (New) A method of producing the alkaline protease of claim 28, comprising culturing a microorganism which produces the alkaline protease in a culture medium and then isolating the alkaline protease from the culture medium.

43. (New) A detergent composition comprising the alkaline protease of claim 28.

44. (New) The detergent composition of claim 43, which contains 0.1 to 5000 U of the alkaline protease per kg of the composition.

45. (New) The detergent composition of claim 44, which comprises a surfactant.

46. (New) The detergent composition of claim 44, which comprises 0.5 to 60 wt. % of the detergent.

47. (New) The detergent composition of claim 44, which contains at least one enzyme other than the alkaline protease.

48. (New) The alkaline protease of claim 7, wherein said alkaline protease has the following physicochemical properties:

(i) Acting pH range

acting over a wide pH range of 4-13 and exhibiting, at a pH of 6-12, 80% or more of the activity at the optimum pH;

(ii) Stable pH range

being stable over a pH range of 6-11 when treated at 40°C for 30 minutes;

(iii) Isoelectric point

having an isoelectric point of approximately 8.9-9.1; and

(iv) Effect of a fatty acid

casein-degrading activity not being inhibited by oleic acid.

SUPPORT FOR THE AMENDMENTS

Claims 1-6 have been canceled.

Claims 7-48 have been added.

Support for new Claims 7-48 can be found in the Claims 1-6 as originally filed, as well as the specification at pages 2-45.

The specification has been amended at pages 3-4 to clarify the sequence identifiers.

No new matter has been added by the present amendment.